



# PSSA NEWS & VIEWS

BULLETIN OF THE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

*APRIL 75*



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## PSSA NEWS AND VIEWS

Official Newsletter of the Photographic  
Society of Southern Africa

Vol. 3, No. 4

April 1975

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#### SO YOU WANT TO BE A PHOTOGRAPHER?

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Editor: Ivor S. Shepherd

Production: Les Luckhoff

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COVER PICTURE: "THE SKIER" by Bridgette  
Pacy-Tootel, taken in sub zero conditions  
in Norway this picture has done well in  
magazines and salons. Lots of action  
depicted by the blur in the poise.

## FOCAL PLANE

Having ploughed out three magazines in  
as many weeks I now find I have got a  
little disenchanted with writing editor-  
ials each month.

However, the response for copy has been  
overwhelming, with the exception of the  
PSSA Directors, everyone wants to get a  
piece in News and Views. And that's just  
great.

We have a Secretary now, a Mrs. Pam Smith  
who is listed on the rear inside cover.  
Any queries not related to the usual  
sources can be directed to Pam for the  
attention of the Executive.

I've now got about 4 series lined up for  
the Focus On... series, and perhaps I'd  
better give this one a rest after these  
4 are complete. (It'll save money on  
printing).

But that's quite enough from me, let's  
get over to the others out there.

## \*\*\*\*\* ARGUS-PSSA COLOUR SLIDE COMPETITION

By Tom Botha.

Once upon a time.... and that's the end  
of that fairy tale. In actual fact, what  
happened was that one Abelheim, FPS(SA)  
did a little fast talking and convinced  
the Argus Group that a slide show spon-  
sored by PSSA and Argus would be a great  
promotional effort for their papers. (The  
fact that it would give PSSA a little  
spare looly also entered the picture).  
The show went off well, PSSA earned them-  
selves some cash for their sadly depleted  
coffers, and it was agreed, by those who  
wouldn't have to do the work, that the  
show should be organised on the same lines  
the following year.

Thus the stage was set for the 1974 show.  
Len Abelheim, after negotiating on be-  
half of PSSA, settled for the figure of  
Three grand, plus a little C note just to  
break up the round figure, and then, when  
the need arose for organising the show,  
remembered he had a business appointment  
in the Far East. (A place called Vladi-  
vostok). Abelheims' stand-in, Les Luck-  
hoff, seeing the writing on the wall,

took another half-hitch in his belt, pulled up his socks, and pulled the con job of the century by talking me into taking charge of the 1974 Argus/PSSA Show. (This was done deliberately as Tom Botha, then a member of the Executive Committee, had fallen into disfavour with Les owing to his strenuous objection to attending midnight meetings of the Executive held in Benoni, about 110 kms from his home). Les actually conned me into this scheme by saying, in effect, if not verbatim, "What a challenge this is.... to run this daft scheme from outset to a profitable conclusion". I discovered the next morning that I had ... (a) a terrible hangover from Les' plum brandy, and (b) sole charge of the 1974 Argus/PSSA show. I also had the impression that I had made a horrible mistake, as by even speaking to the Luckhoff I had left myself wide open to being deliberately misunderstood. The good news was that Botha was to be the BOSS of the whole show, with thousands of helpers just itching to get into the act. (This is a typical Luckhoff story; that's how come I'm the editor of News and Views). In fact, I couldn't loose, I had PSSA behind me.

After approaching several Reef clubs who were either organising last year's salon next year's exposition or celebrating their centenary in advance I manage to collect around me a small circle of helpers, mostly beginner types who were persuaded to give up their leisure time to aid a cause which was to be a wonderful experience for them. They would meet important people, see wonderful slides and do exciting things. (Like writing out 15,000 slide titles on 5,000 sheets of paper). When these mugs realised they had been conned, other mugs like Ivor Shepherd, Walkie Talkie and her Vossie, Kiek and Vernon Burton and other old stalwarts had to be called in to sort things out.

After working for weeks into the small hours, unwrapping parcels in which slides had been cunningly concealed beneath layers of cotton wool, alternated with sticky tape (used with such gay abandon that it must have followed the authors home from the office), to say nothing of the styrofoam, cardboard, paper straw, excelsior and rubber bands, this HAPPY (?) band had sorted, indexed and cata-

logued 14,000 slides. Authors who understood that "mounted between glass" meant placing all 12 slides between two window panes and wrapping the whole lot up in sticky tape were a delight to the band as were those who sent in the whole copy of the newspaper, thus providing us with the fun of searching through the pages for the entry form and then cutting it out. There was in fact never a dull moment.

If we hadn't forgotten the milk for the coffee, then we found the cleaning staff had appropriated our spoons. If the spoons and milk were there, then the cups and biscuits had usually been lifted.

The letters from the entrants also provided much in the way of entertainment to the teams of workers. One dear old soul wrote a letter to the judges apologising for her unusual approach but also went on to explain to the judges why her slides should win the competition. (Poor old soul, she didn't realise the judges couldn't read). The other author who entitled his slides something like this "Lamppost at 630 p.m. outside Westminster Cathedral on the 25th March, 1956 on a rainy day taken through an Orange Filter" then, as he couldn't get the full title on the slide, had typed this little lot on a piece of paper, which was then lovingly wrapped around the slide and held in place with about 150 cms of sticky tape, was another favourite with the gang. The originality of some of the titles, such as "Tranquility", "Sincerity", "Reflections", "Tranquil Serenity", "Reflective Tranquility", "Serene Reflections", "Serene Tranquility", "Tranquil Sunset" and "Tranquil Sunrises" to say nothing of "Tranquility". In fact, for the statistically minded there were, (a), 7,543 Tranquilities, (b), 6,785 Serenity's, (c), 5,467 Reflections, plus infinite numbers of the above in various permutations.

Came the day of judgement, and various people involved with the competition started to arrive, about a half hour late. The judging was done on a Sunday and the Star building was all locked up, with the exception of the despatch area where our vehicles were to be parked. The ascent from here to the second floor was by a goods lift, followed by a 3,5 kilometre stroll along passages with

turn-offs (unmarked) every .25 kilometres and one finally arrived at the main lift shaft, where another lift raised one to the fourth floor. On reaching the fourth floor we found (a) the doors were all locked; (b) no blacking out had been done as was promised. Thank God for the African gentleman who eventually arrived with (a) the key to the door, (b) bundles of brown paper and (c) large rolls of sticky tape which had followed him along the passage from the office downstairs. The Stars' projection screen was not co-operating with the lad trying to place it in an upright position, other willing helpers were bringing in the slides and the judging sheets. By now the late arrivals had arrived and, with no one to meet them and guide them through the maze of passages, the Star office was getting the full tour treatment from the judges, workers and lookers on.

When the judges arrived they were roped in to help set up screens, projectors and generally impressed into helping. One of the JPS characters who was supposed to provide a screen arrived 45 minutes late, asked if the screen was still required, and seemed a little put out when someone spoke a "mite sharply" to him.

Finally, the judging started, went swimmingly well, all the lost time was made up, and a lunch at the Elizabeth Hotel really made it all worth while. (For that day at least). The lunch was paid for by PSSA, which, other than my phone bill, (actually part thereof) was the only expense they had been involved in. (We even supplied our own milk and sugar). After lunch it was back to the Star, and pick the finalists and the overall winner. This was done without too MUCH drama, and everyone wandered off home at about 3.30 p.m.

One large expense still to be incurred was the script writers fee. Although this was debatable I felt that it was worthwhile paying someone to come up with a worthwhile script, which was original and would be done on time.

Now, after the drama of the judging, that is, the guy who promised the second screen arriving almost an hour late, sans screen, the Star disintegrating before it had been hit by a slide, and the tea drama, we were

finally ready to "put the show on the road".

As I had booked for PSSA Congress, which took place immediately after the judging I gave the script writers the slides, magazine trays, and told them to get on with it. I knew they were reliable and could be trusted to do the job. On my return from Congress I telephoned the script writers for their script, and, you've guessed it, it wasn't ready. Add to this the fact that the Title maker also hadn't produced any titles and there I was up the creek without a paddle. To add a little topping to the cake the Argus Group now climbed in with their ideas on how they wanted the winning slides presented which created quite a problem. (Ah well, one more now didn't mean a thing). The upshot was that a week had now been lost, and at this stage, the loss of 7 days was generally considered a disaster.

Another blow in the form of the sound equipment made life interesting. The Director of the Company who had promised to lend the sound equipment had gone overseas and hadn't told anyone of the intention to loan PSSA/Argus the equipment. The recording session with Robin Alexander was in the nature of an anti-climax, the fact that the studio didn't have any suitable background music being overcome by a quick trip to a record lending library. (Wonderful place Joey's). The recording session naturally didn't end at 8.30 as planned, but went on until midnight. (Like the Executive meetings). The recording engineer (?) then discovered that we were using domestic tape recorders for playback and the speed he had recorded at would not be suitable. A further delay ensued whilst the tapes were dubbed at a slower speed. Then they were edited. And now we had only one week left to do the programming. Using a comparatively new device called the Animat Converter, supplied by Leitz we got going with this part of the job. Meanwhile, on playing through the tapes I had discovered that I didn't like the last recording one little bit as it sounded as if Robin Alexander was rushing like a train to get finished. (Considering it was midnight he probably was). The solution was to change the first series to the end and the last series to the beginning. This was done, using sellotape to splice the tape, which caused the whole thing to

stick to the reel. At this stage we had 5 reels of tape to cope with, and thus we dubbed at a still slower speed to get the programme onto 2 reels. My home made splices were now eliminated but another two days were down the drain.

Despite a quick briefing from Barrie Wilkins FPS (SA) in P.E. at the Congress I now had to learn all the things the Animatic would and wouldn't do. The main problem being that the script writers and the commentator, although proficient, hadn't any idea of what we had to go through to get the programme flowing with changes timed just right and going along smoothly.

And this was all the more difficult when one considers the hotch potch of slides we had to work with.

The show was due to open at the Selbourne on Monday - we were working at the programming at night. During the day, instead of doing my paid for office duties I was organising the venue, the rest of the sound equipment and the screen. The catering had to be organised, the equipment set up. JPS were roped in to organise the setting up of the Hall, and as someone on the Star hadn't thought to book the Hall for one day in advance, we all had to wait on Sunday night for a party to finish before we could get into the Hall to set up.

Most of the equipment was at the Star offices and the screen was at CCJ. I arranged to pick up the screen on Saturday morning and organised a lorry free of charge. It didn't arrive. So Sunday night was spent putting up the sound equipment as we had no idea where the projectors would be placed in relation to the screen (which wasn't there).

On Monday I organised the screen and was told eventually that it had been delivered at the Selbourne Hall. Sure enough, there was the screen - but no stand. A rush across town to where the screen had been picked up, and sure enough, all the bits and pieces for the stand were there. How to get these to the Hall. Bright idea. Tie the angles to the top of the door handles with string. (Don't forget... I'm driving the bosses new car so the roof is out). Off at 10 km.h. and around the first corner. Off come the

angles and hit the door buttons and all the doors open. I stopped in the heavy traffic, forced the doors closed, locked them from the inside and duly arrived at the Hall. The angles were offloaded, taken upstairs and I returned the boss's car. It was now knock-off time so I went back to the Hall. The screen was erected the projectors set up, and, although the screen was a bit low, there was no time to organise anything else.

The Official Opening and Prize Giving was a bit flat after the hectic performance during the day, and the only complaint was that some of the slides were out of focus, as they were as the auto-focus on one of the projectors wasn't working properly. To add to the excitement we suddenly realised that the projectors, mounted in the gallery, were sloping downwards at about 30 degrees, and as the magazine went through the projector it would just keep going downhill and land in someones' lap, in the audience below. This meant we had to stand there and grasp the tray as it went through the projector. The first time round I grabbed the tray from the top projector, turned around to put it down and found I couldn't reach the table. By this time the tray in the bottom projector was due for a change, so I put down the one tray, grabbed the other, knocked over the first tray with a hell of a crash and then spent the whole of interval and another hour after the show getting the tray reloaded in sequence.

The faulty projector was returned to the agents, and duly re-installed supposedly repaired. We also organised some tables to raise the screen framing. We also rehearsed a drill for changing magazines without having to drop them. The second night went off well. Apart from the poor attendances the rest of the week was fine, until the last show on Saturday night. Whilst sitting smugly behind the projector watching the show a strange thing happened. The wrong slide appeared on the screen. The projector had gone into reverse. After jabbing the button a few times Laurie Lavis got the whole thing back into sequence. The rest of the evening we sat there with bated breath waiting for the fault to re-appear. It did not.

On Tuesday morning we were to leave for

Cape Town, rather disappointed with the poor attendance in the Golden City, but happy in the knowledge that CTPS would have everything organised for us in Cape Town, and, that although we would have to work hard each night, we would at least have some of the daylight hours to ourselves to take a few pictures.

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## P.S.S.A. DIRECTORS

### LES LUCKHOFF : VICE PRESIDENT



"Born at an early age in Johannesburg, I moved to Benoni - my parents came too - I believe I qualify as a double pioneer of the town".

"My early schooldays were spent in Benoni and later I became a boarder at St. Johns College, Johannesburg - I have recently heard that they have just managed to live this down. I have the doubtful and unique privilege of having been confined to the College for 4 months for a particular hilarious episode. It wasn't so hilarious after the subsequent 6 of the best."

Les then moved to London, joined a Chartered Accountant, became addicted to swing music and photography, had friends who alternated between George Shearing on the one hand and photographic greates on the other, but managed to distinguish himself in neither field. War arrived and the RAF claimed Les for a while.

"I loved flying, did about 3,000 hours in over 40 different types of aircraft, and really enjoyed the war". Les flew in two of Britains top fighter squadrons, No. 131 County of Kent and 33 Squadron, one of the RAF's oldest fighter squadrons. Originally equiped with Spitfires they progressed to Tempets; Les first flew jets in 1944, and thinks he "may be the first

S.A. to fly a jet". When the war ended, Les collected the assorted "ironmongery" handed to him, his wife, and two tickets to Benoni. He also returned to Accountancy and has been in that line ever since.

"My interest in photography waned between 1948 - 1952 as I sold my Leica to pay for my furniture and two children which arrived rather cunningly during this period.

With an improvement in the finances Les went back into photography, although he feels he should have taken up chess instead. He joined the Benoni and then the Springs Colour Slide Clubs. Strong lobbying in the later club has failed to get rid of him to this date. In fact, Les has an 18 year association with Springs and is an Honorary Life Member of the Club, one of about three I think.

Once Les got onto the Executive of PSSA that was the end of his photography, "my camera has got rusty, but one of my proudest moments was when I was asked to come forward and receive the Presidents' award at the 1974 Congress".

"I fully realise that the team backing me up should have been the ones who were up there sharing that award with me, but maybe I'll be able to see some of these great guys get this award as PSSA grows in stature".

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## THE SAGA OF ERMINTRUDE SNOG (MISS)

Dear Mr. Twinke,  
Oh dear! So that's it..... I didn't push the wind-on lever far enough. How annoying, how frustrating, but thank you so much for letting me know and returning the XXE to me so promptly.  
But more frustration. My "Foolproof" camera still isn't working as it should. I loaded my film very carefully as the little book tells me, and I would it on just as you said I must, but when I press the little button nothing happens.  
So now what? I even took the film out again and then had to buy another because I couldn't get the little end out of the little case of the first one. So then I put the new film in in the same very careful way, but when I press the little but-

ton nothing happens.

All I can think of now is to send it back to you for the third time for you to see what has gone wrong now with the beastly thing.

Yours defeatedly,  
Ermintrude Snog (Miss).

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## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC WORLD

by Roy Hohannessen FPS(SA)

This is a question that should be seriously studied by every club committee and every club member, for that matter.

The other evening I attended the opening of an Exhibition of Photography by a young man of 19 years of age. What an eye-opener! There, for all to see, was the traditional and the contemporary treatment of a mundane subject - The Karoo - in colour and in black and white. I understand that with a little bit of luck the pictures will be published in book form. The man in questions has no formal training in photography, and what is more, has not been polluted by club judges' remarks comments, suggestions, etc. He learnt his chemistry from a friend, also a competent photographer, went out into the world and did his own thing, and how refreshing it was to see his work - all very powerful.

What worries me is the fact that there are more competent amateur photographers who work outside clubs than within our circle. There must be a reason for this? Is it that the old timers so dominate the scene that up-and-coming youngsters just don't get a chance to show new and exciting work for fear of adverse criticism, so they just stay at home and do their own thing?

Write to News and Views putting your own point of view; it may generate some healthy discussion.

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## PSSA MAGAZINE COMPETITION

I've had several requests about the PSSA magazine competition. Well, I must just admit to the fact that I don't know anything about this competition, although

somewhere or other I did hear about a competition of this sort. I'll try to get a set of rules, if any exist, and if they don't, I'm sure the Executive are capable of organising a set of rules. I should imagine the magazine judging would take place at Congress each year. And I don't think the Editor of News and Views should be one of the judges either. However, how about the suggestions from those who are going to compete. Set the rules for the competition, but rules such as, "The magazine must be produced by the Jabula Camera Club each month" will not be accepted.

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## THE SALON SCENE

by Detlef G. Basel.

### PRETORIA INTERNATIONAL:

28th April 1975 - 3rd May, 1975. Collegeium Hall for Advanced Technical Education: Du Toit Street, Pretoria. Prints on display from 10.00 a.m. - 10.00 p.m. and slides screened at 8.00 p.m. each day.

### WILDLIFE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA:

Deadline: 2nd June, 1975. Forms from: Mr. D.T. Pearson, 68 Mons Road, Bellair, Durban. Showing 18th June - 21st of June, 1975. Slides returned 14th July, 1975.

### VAN DER BIJLPARK NATIONAL:

Deadline: 8th July, 1975. Forms from: Mr. R. Erasmus, P.O. Box 813, Vanderbijlpark, 1900. Showing: 7th and 8th August, 1975.

### LOWVELD SALON (Nelspruit National):

Deadline: 14th August, 1975. Forms from: Mr. L. Palmer, P.O. Box 16, Nelspruit, 1200. Showing: 16th - 20th September, 1975.

### WELKOM NATIONAL:

Deadline: 17th September, 1975. Forms from: Mr. Ben Mulder, P.O. Box 14, Welkom.

### S.A. SALON INTERNATIONAL:

Deadline: 16th September, 1975. Forms from: Mr. Eddie Lightbody, P.O. Box 147, Isando, Transvaal. Showing: 13th - 18th October, 1975.

### PICTORIAL PRINTS:



CITY OF ANGELS (M-C). Closes May 6. Exhibited May 18th - June 1. Fee \$2.50. Data: Clarence Inman, APSA, 412 S. Parkview St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90057.

SAN ANTONIO (M-C) Closes May 9. Exhibited June 1 - 15. Fee \$2.50. Data: E.L. Palmer, 129 Leming Dr., San Antonio, Tex. 78201.

CHICAGO CACCA (M-C) Closes May 14. Exhibited June 1 - 15. Fee \$2.50. Data: Richard Obey, 8017 Churchill, Niles, Ill. 60648.

ORANGE EMPIRE (M-C) Closes July 1. Exhibited July 24 - Aug. 1. Fee \$2.50. Data: Arnie Hirsch, 1673 Chateau, Pl., Anaheim, Calif. 92802.

EDINBURGH (M-C) Closes July 4. Exhibited Aug. 16 - Sep. 6. Fee \$2. Data: John E. Black, 18 Dryden St., Edinburgh, EH7, 4PN, Scotland.

NEW YORK COLOR (C) Closes July 7. Exhibited Aug. 9 - 16. Fee \$2.50. Data: Christopher Loo, 40, 28th Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11214.

HONG KONG 35mm (M-C) Closes July 10 (color prints), July 17 (monochrome). Exhibited Aug. 15-20. Fee \$2.50. Data: Liu Woon-man, Flat A, Taikoon Mansion, 13th Fl., 446-452 Lockhart Road, Hong Kong.

NEW YORK (NCPA) (M-C) Closes Aug. 2. Exhibited Aug. 23 - 29. Fee \$2.50. Data: Yardly Chin, 7 Elizabeth St., New York, NY. 10013.

OREGON STATE FAIR (M-C) Closes Aug. 7. Exhibited Aug. 23 - Sep. 1. Fee \$2.50. Data: Oregon State Fair, Photography Exhibition, Salem, Ore. 97310.

SYDNEY (M-C) Closes Aug. 20. Exhibited Sept. 18 - 29. Fee \$3. Data: Wilma Grady, Box A144, P.O. Sydney South, 2000 Australia.

NORTHERN INDIANA (M-C) Closes Aug. 28. Exhibited Sep. 21 - Oct. 10. Fee \$2.50. Data: Frances Johnson, 537 Freeland Ave, Calumet City, Ill. 60409.

MIDLAND (M-C) Closes Sep. 13. Exhibited Oct. 11 - Nov. 8. Fee \$1 plus postage.

Data: North America - Richard B. Kimball, 220 Boxford Str., Johnson, "Thule", 18 The Green, Hardington, Northampton NN4, OBU, England.

BILZEN (Omni-Candid) (M-C) Closes Nov. 10. Exhibited Dec. 21 - 28. Fee \$2. Data: Paul Thijs, Huize de Roerdomp, Natveldweg 2, B-3740, Bilzen, Belgium.

#### COLOUR SLIDES:

CITY OF ANGELS May 15-28. Deadline Apr. 29. Forms: Los Angeles Photography Center, 412 So. Parkview St. Los Angeles Calif. 90057.

RICHMOND June 7-8. Deadline: May 13. Forms: Thomas G. Wyatt, 10509 Saxony Rd, Richmond, Va. 23235. Entry fee \$1.75.

DENVER (C) June 5-16. Deadline May 13. Forms: Chas. G. Summers, Jr. 3123 E. Weaver Pl, Littleton, Colo. 80121, Entry fee \$1.75.

SAN FRANCISCO June 27-July 16. Deadline June 2. Forms: Albert P. Bekker, P.O. Box 27265, San Francisco, Calif. 94127, Entry fee \$2.

BUENOS AIRES July 16-28. Deadline June 16. Forms: Sergio S.O. Sastre, Casilla de Correo, 5377, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

ORANGE EMPIRE (C) July 23-30. Deadline July 1. Forms: Arnie Hirsch, 1673 Chateau, Anaheim, Calif. 92802. Entry fee \$1.75.

ERNO-PICAMERA (C) Sep. 7-15. Deadline Aug. 8. Forms: Etienne Vandeweghe, Wulverstraat 27, 8902 Zillebeke, Belgium, Entry fee \$2.

SYDNEY Spet. 18-29. Deadline Aug. 20. Forms: Wilma Grady, P.O. Box A144, P.O. Sydney South, 2000, Australia. Entry fee \$2.

LOS ANGELES COUNTRY FAIR (C) Sep. 4-28. Deadline: Aug. 27. Forms: Photography Dept., CSD, Los Angeles Country Fair, Box 2250, Pomona, Calif. 91766.

#### NATURE:

DENVER Closing May 13. Exhibited May 25-June 15. Fee: Slides \$1.75 prints \$2.75. Forms: Charles G. Summers, Jr, 3123 E. Weaver Pl, Littleton, Colo. 80121.

**CHICAGO CACCA** (new) Closing May 14, Prints only. Fee \$2.50. Forms: Mrs. Betty Obey, 8017 Churchill, Niles, Ill. 60648.

**CPAC** Closing May 26. Exhibited June 21-24. Fee \$1.75. Forms: Miss K.F. Elliott, 14 White Oak Blvd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M8X 1H9.

**PACIFIC COAST INSECT** Closing June 3. Exhibited June 20-24. Fee: \$1.50. Slides \$1.50, prints. Forms: E.C. Klostermeyer, P.O. Box 328, Prosser, Wash. 99350.

**SANTA BARBARA** Closes June 20. Exhibited July 19-26. Fee \$1.50. Forms: Mrs. Mabel M. Johnson, 1712 Calle Cerro, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93101.

**ORANGE EMPIRE** Closes July 1. Exhibited July 15-Aug. 5. Fee \$1.75. Forms: Arnold L. Hirsch, 1673 Chateau Place, Anaheim, Calif. 92802.

**EURO-PICAMERA** (new) closing Aug. 8. Exhibited Sep. 8-15. Fee \$2. Forms: Etienne Vandenweghe, Wulve Straat 27, 8902 Zillebeke, Belgium.

**SYDNEY**, Closing Aug. 20. Exhibited Sep. 18-29. Fee \$2, slides, \$3 for prints, plus an additional \$1.50 if mounted prints are submitted. Entry forms: Wilma Grady, Box A144, P.O. Sydney South 2000, Australia.

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## SALON DIARY

Detlef G. Basel, Salon Co-ordinator to P.S.S.A. is busy writing up a salon diary for South Africa, covering both National and International Salons. In order to satisfy most clubs who run salons it is incumbent on these clubs to contact Detlef Basel at their earliest convenience regarding the dates they have selected or require for their Salons. In this manner 1976 and 1977 should see the Salon scene without any clash of dates as is happening at the moment. PLEASE send this information, i.e. Deadline date, showing date, judging date, acceptances notified by, rejects returned, catalogues posted and entries returned by, to Detlef G. Basel, Salon Co-Ordinator, P.O. Box 20048, Alkantrant, 0005, Pretoria, Tvl. Your co-operation in this matter will be appre-

ciated and will be to your own benefit.

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## FORUM

The following letters were addressed to the Editor of PSSA News and Views:

Dear Lady,

I would like to thank you very much for the welcome articles of "Exposure Control" and the one on "Photography in General" by S.H. Utterspeed.

In Bedford we have no photoclub and no advisers; by the way, I like the nice way you write very much.

The nearest town with a photoclub is Grahamstown, 63 miles from here, and Port Elizabeth, is 126 miles from here, and one certainly can't go all that way to a meeting each month. Thus, every bit of advice is very welcome.

Yours faithfully,  
Jack Veenendaal,  
42 Porter Street,  
Bedford. 5780. C.P.

(Ed. Perhaps the P.E. Club would like to make a week-end of it at Bedford and show a few slides series, etc. for the benefit of the photographers there. 126 miles should be a nice run for a Saturday morning and back again Sunday afternoon?).

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## INTER-COUNTRY PRINT TEST

By Bridgette Pacey-Tootal, PRO for PSSA. In the first ever Inter Country Print Test Match organised by Southern Africa Postal Portfolios and their exchange counterparts in Australia and the U.K. the South African set of prints has done extremely well, and is out in front. The first heat, U.K. versus SA was judged in Australia by 5 judges, each awarding a total of 100. The "runs" when added together gave UK 2925 and SA 3055, of which Eric Heinze's prints scored a double century. In the heat UK versus Australia judged in SA by eight judges, UK scored 4767 runs and Australia 5325 runs. The prints are now in UK where the final "Test" Australia versus SA is being judged by the British photographers. This has been such a success that the next Test series is being organised for the near future.

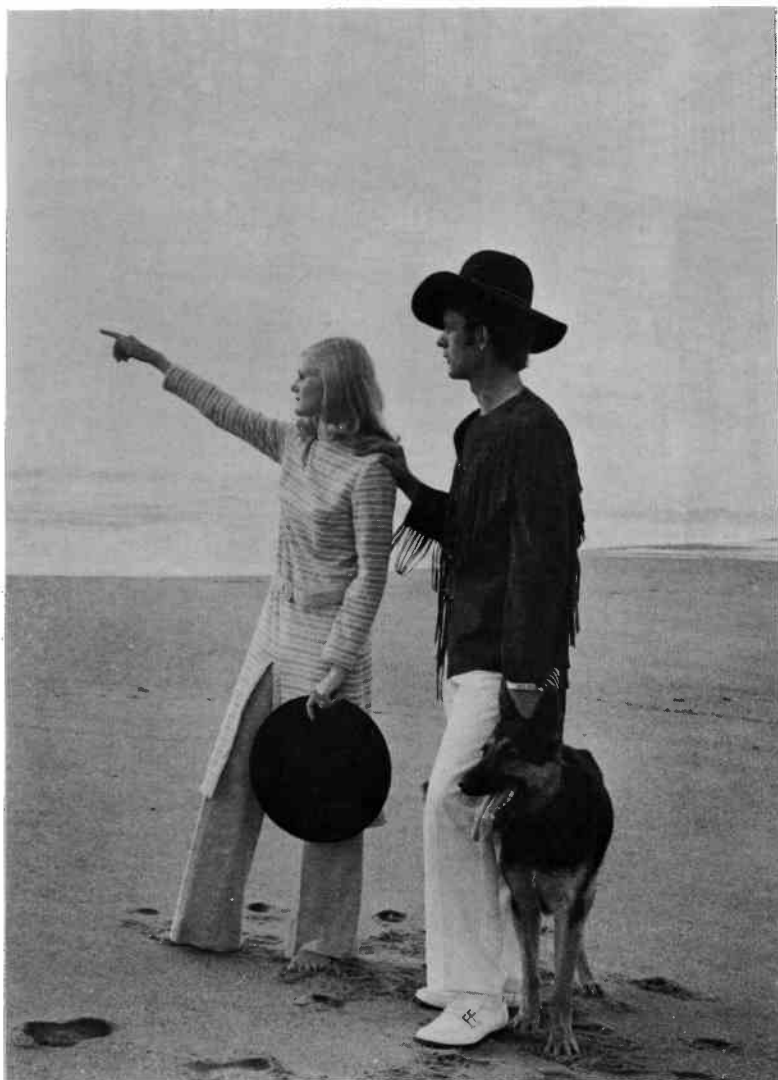
## FOCUS ON....Bridgette Pacy-Tootal.

Bridgette started out in life in Estcourt, Natal and attended St. Dominics Convent in Port Shepstone. After a correspondence course in Journalism and Short Story writing in 1962 a further course in Journalism and magazine layout at the London Regent Street Polytechnic followed.

Shortly after leaving school Bridgette "took up photography and started the Alexandra Camera Club on the Natal South Coast, and also joined the Durban Camera Club".

Cameras: Ziss Ikon to start, then a Braun Paxette and finally the Minolta SR1 and SRT101 "which are my faithful companions today".

Whilst in London in 1962 "I met Joan Wicks, Editor of the Good Photography Magazine, and worked as an editorial assistant, then Assistant Editor, for the next 4½ years".



Part of a successful fashion assignment series. Early morning light, 5.30 a.m. sets the scene for imaginative backgrounds for modern clothing, with the dog playing the part as a natural prop for the series. 55mm Rokkor lens on Minolta SRT 101.

During her period on the staff of Good Photography Bridgette had the opportunity of meeting such famous photographers as Sir George Pollock, Ida Carr, John Barras Walker, Benny Hill (who is also a TV actor), George Lewinski and many others. At this period "I met London photo-journalist, Bo Collins, and thus my career as a freelance photo-journalist was launched. During this time I travelled extensively throughout the U.K. and Europe, adding a Rolliflex and Mamiya C330 to my equipment". In a make shift darkroom set up in a kitchen B.P-T produced travel and photographic articles for magazines in Holland, London, and South Africa; at the same time producing a monthly column for Good Photography and dealing party with the Good Photography Postal Portfolio Club.

Returned to S.A. in 1967, continued freelancing for various newspapers and mags; specialized in fashion and travel features, as well as local news reporting. Founded the amateur Postal Portfolios of Southern Africa, based on the Good Photography scheme of earlier years.



"EARLY MORNING AT LAS CORALES". A bar in the village of Barcelona. The lone tourist sits with a glass of wine whilst two locals await the rush, yet to come. The barman in the background also rests (?) or recuperates before the next "sessions" begins. The poster of the bullfight really sets the picture apart from the usual humdrum street scene.

"PUEBLO ESPAGNOL" The play of light and shade on the arches and wrought iron structures in a little street in Barcelona caught the eye. The picture has been often used for travel features as well as being a successful salon entry.



# THIS VEXED QUESTION OF JUDGING

By Stan Brothers; Kroonstad Camera Club.

As I usually do, after receiving News and Views, I read the December issue from cover to cover and then read parts again. What interested me in that issue was references to judging, that perennial source of comment, criticism, and, on occasion, exasperation.

The first item that interested me was reference to an article in FLASH, journal of P.P.S., quoted on page 7, and the editor's comments thereon. In particular the references to "an honest, clear, just and impartial method of judging" in the penultimate paragraph, and "a computerised judging session" in the final paragraph interested me, this last remark intended, of course, as a joke.

Then, bottom of page 18, left hand column, in notes as to obtaining P.S.S.A. Honours, and referring to panels of judges, "Each must nevertheless have a wide personal experience and a very open mind - to ensure avoidance of personal likes or dislikes. The whole attitude of the panel is a positive one, in that they endeavour to accept work rather than reject it".

At the outset one must accept that judges are impartial and do express honest opinions, why should it be otherwise?

As was truly said a very long time "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder", and equally it has long been accepted that any assessment of what is art is a personal opinion, and that there are as many personal opinions as there are people.

The writer accepts that Photography, pursued as a means of expression, is an art form, as distinguished from documentary photography, such as for instance photographs of industrial installations intended for advertisement or as an elucidation of a process, and perhaps one might include such subjects as a frame filling close-up of, for instance, an insect which is really an entomological documentary picture. Such work can be judged by more or less fixed rules, fi-

delity to the original, extent to which it serves its purpose and so on. Photography as an art form, on the other hand, is a means employed by a photographer to illustrate what he sees and feels, his own particular interpretation of the subject or object photographed. This applies more especially to such subjects as landscapes, seascapes, abstract subjects etc. which afford scope for numerous interpretative alternatives.

The documentary subjects can largely be covered and judged by fixed rules, sometimes dubbed by me the "slide rule", rules of two-thirds or two-fifths, spot on overall focus, good subject placing, level horizons, no light traps in background, and so on. But when one is dealing with subjects not so governable by fixed rules, then enters that mysterious ingredient often expressed as "Impact", or "What a striking picture!". And that is just where the personal factor comes in. And what is that personal factor, but just those "personal likes or dislikes" mentioned above.

Instance the electronic box at judging sessions, you have say three judges and three sets of values on the box, each judge signifies his rating on his section of the box, and generally there are three different ratings. Then suddenly all the ratings are the same, all in the high bracket, what has happened? One look at the slide or print in question tells you, OUTSTANDING IMPACT, being a combination of all the desired qualities according to the rules, plus that extra undefinable something included under the all-embracing term "Impact".

In News and Views referred to, page 17, right hand column, and over the page, are listed considerations for acceptability of the ciné films. These consist entirely of technical details. Nothing is said of that all important factor "Impact", even more necessary in a successful ciné film than in slides or prints.

It is no good saying that judges must avoid personal likes or dislikes, that they will have such is totally unavoidable, the person who can be completely and totally objective probably doesn't exist. And if one could be totally objective, what would that mean? Would it be to judge work solely by rules and re-

gulations? That would surely reduce photography to an exercise in geometry. Surely it is just those personal likes and dislikes that have to guide a judge, unless he is to be merely a rules observer, he can't judge on anyone else's likes and dislikes! That he must avoid prejudice all will agree, but he should know the difference between likes and dislikes on one hand, and prejudice on the other. The writer has often felt that the object of an art form should be not to appeal solely to the initiated connoisseur, (and if it did would it not still be his personal opinion), but to have a general appeal, and this applies perhaps more especially to ciné films. What appeals to a general audience in a ciné film is not its freedom from bad splices, jump cuts, continuity lapses, occasional out of focus shots, etc, but its IMPACT. Without impact the most correctly photographed, constructed and edited film falls flat.

So the writer has often thought that the best way of having photographic art judged would be to submit it to a general audience of average educated people who have no technical knowledge of the mechanics of photography, who would do their judging on the basis of what had IMPACT on them, what appealed or did not appeal, and perhaps then one would come to a better understanding of what is generally accepted as "art" and distinct from something conforming merely to a set of rules. A very experienced and successful exhibitor of slides at salons, here and overseas, once said to the writer that, for success with competition slides and prints, one must know where they are to be exhibited, know the preferences of the judges there, and see that they get what they like and prefer. Sound advice, which of course still boils down to pandering to judges known likes and preferences and avoiding their dislikes.

So one is back to square one, any judgement of what is art, photographic or otherwise, is a matter of personal opinion, and will remain so. Probably the best way of living with vagaries of judging is to see your photography, and methods of expression by its means, as something you do for your own satisfaction, not something connected with pot hunting or seeking nice words from judges.

If one gets them, good and well, but if not, why worry, one has enjoyed one's photography, and after all that is the main thing, or should be.

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## NEWS.....

### GERMISTON -

I've just received a letter from the Germiston Camera and Cine Club re their Republic Roundabout. I'm sorry this will appear too late for anything to be done about it but we are now running 30 days ahead for publication purposes, so anything you want put in News and Views to advertise a competition should be sent in at least 3 months ahead of time and preferably 6 months before the event.

### RUSTENBURG -

Well, Rustenburg sent me a letter, should perhaps have gone into the Forum section, but I'll quote, "We would like to inform all photographers that in Rustenburg we still have our club and are carrying on gamely, after just having celebrated our SECOND birthday. We hope to meet the New Year with bigger, better and braver ideas". Congratulations to Rustenburg Camera Club. The rest of their letter I'll publish elsewhere.

### SANDTON -

It's about time I mentioned Sandton, I think. This is because I've really had some blunt reminders from the Secretary, and what not? Sandton are looking for a new home in which to hold their meetings. (Anyone got a spare Hall they aren't using in the area?). Sandton are also looking for a colour picture of a Hoopoe bird, which they hope to use to copy for their lapel badge. (Len Miller, who is judging at your club has a slide of a hoopoe). Howard Wolff APS(SA) is Chairman with Dr. Loukie Viljoen sitting in the Vice Chair. And with 7 new members in February they seem to be growing well. I notice Gary Player got a Gold in the Photo-journalism section on the 12th Feb. 1975.

### SALISBURY -

Well, we live and learn. Mike Hambrook, the Editor of "The Rhodesian Picturemaker" has just arrived back after his overseas trip. And lo and behold, all that Kodak-chrome film he bought over there

has to go right back again for processing. Just great. As Mike says, "If I'd known that in the first place, I'd have left it there".

#### BULAWAYO -

This year the Bulawayo Camera Club celebrates it's 40th. Anniversary and I'm sure everyone will join with me in wishing them another 40 or more years. The editorial deals with an article read in the Practical Photography magazine where it was stated .... "camera clubs are tightly knit little secret societies most reluctant to invite new members". Apparently when the writer "did attend a new club I was treated like a gate crasher". As the "Rambler" says, "No one can say that about our club". I'll second that about most camera clubs, they're mostly friendly souls. Although I guess if you act like a gate crasher, you'll get treated like one. Regarding your remarks about Andreas Feininger, "who I think has written a number of other books", you think right. Feininger is a great teacher through the written word.

#### SPRINGS -

Lex Liston has given up the job of Editor of Colorama after many years service. Congratulations Lex, how in heck did you manage it? I'll pay for that recipe. So will my family. However, the club certainly appreciated Lex's efforts, as he was made an Honorary Life member a short while back, and the new Editor is fulsome in his praise of the work done by Lex Liston. (He's no relation to Sonny by the way). Let's see some slides again Lex, or a slide series. The 1975 Salon has gone by the board for Springs owing to the late release of a date for the show. June 1975 was apparently the only date left in a crowded calendar and this certainly never left Springs with enough time to organise their show. I'm sure everyone will be looking forward to the 1976 edition.

#### PHOTOPOST -

I like the idea of a special members page devoted solely to members who wish to "put pen to paper" as the Editor puts it. Don't hold your breath Bridgette, unless our friend inundates you with copy. The Technical Notes section in the February issue deal with High Contrast and Tone

Separation as well as Solarisation. I'll try to reproduce this later.

#### PRETORIA -

It's really great to get a magazine from the Iscor Camera Club, even if we can't get steel from Iscor. The club was out of action for a while, but is now roaring back into the photo scene in the capital city. Lots of luck over there and let's hear from you.

#### NELSPRUIT -

The magazine from the lowveld has a "wanted" ad appearing, as follows:  
WANTED: 3 judges. Must be pleasant, well-mannered and open to persuasion. Have 3 old worn-out ones as trade ins, complete with white sticks and blinkers. Wonder who those three are?

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## FORUM II

The Editor, PSSA News and Views:

Dear Sir,

Having recently entered in the Eastcape International Salon I would like to bring to light the following extract from their entry form which I think needs a little clarification from the organisers, surely?

Paragraph 8: Entry Fees: (b) Please include exchange on cheques or bankdrafts which should be made payable to "Eastcape International Salon of Photography" (No gripes yet). NO POSTAL OR MONEY ORDERS PLEASE.

I would like to know why? Having made enquiries at both the Post Office and the Banks (of which we fortunately, have both in Kimberley .... even if that does sound like Ripley's believe it or not) I have the following to offer:

- 1) Any Bank will charge a handling fee of 3c (three cents) on a Postal Order, regardless of value. If the Postal Order is crossed then it has, obviously, to be paid into a banking account. Otherwise it can be cashed at any Post Office in the Town/city where that Postal Order is received.
- 2) Why create difficulties by demanding cheques or alternatively cash? If you feel that strongly about the three lousy cents that are going to be lost on the deal (and mind you this applies only if you are going to pay those Postal Orders into a banking account



- 2) rather than cash them at the Post Office .... of which there must be more than one in Port Elizabeth; and then you get the exact value of the postal order) then be my guest and charge a fee to cover your so-called losses. Like maybe R1,55c????
- 3) Perhaps other Salon Organisers would like to take up the issue on this one?

Yours sincerely,  
Rai Bigalke, Director, P.S.S.A.

(Ed - Over to Barrie and the boys).

\* \* \* \* \*

If you are of the opinion that the office bearers of our Society are fast asleep, you could be right, but on the other hand.....

Behind the scenes and out of the spotlight members are continually working to build up P.S.S.A. into a strong, useful and virile parent body of photographers throughout Southern Africa.

Our new Secretary, Pam Smith, may be contacted at 53-7349 or by writing to Box 2007, Johannesburg, 2000.

To those who had trouble working out the new annual subs which come into force in July, 1975, let me enlarge.

Ordinary Members: R6.00 p.a. Joint Members (Husband and wife): R7.00 p.a. Organisational Members: (Clubs and Societies): R1.00 per club member. This only applies to members of the Club who are NOT full members of P.S.S.A. Honorary Members, Junior members and Family members do not pay anything to P.S.S.A. Full members of P.S.S.A. must inform their club Secretaries and/or Treasurer, so that when assessing the total membership of the Club he/she must not be taken into account. For example a Club of 99 members with say 10 Family Members, 5 Junior Members, 9 Honorary Members and 20 Full members of P.S.S.A. is liable for an annual sub of R55.00.

Roy Johannessen, FPS(SA),  
President.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SO YOU WANT TO BE A PHOTOGRAPHER?

PART II - By Ivor S. Shepherd.

The last instalment of this series dealt mainly with certain "basic rules" regarding composition, and ideas about viewpoint, balance and how much to shoot.

Since that appeared I've had a few questions about equipment, and, although this was never intended as a equipment series let's do a quick rundown on what you could wind up with in your gadget bag.

Speaking of gadget bags, this could be as good a place as any to kick off. Only the inexperienced walk around with cameras hanging from a neckstrap, plus an exposure meter, plus second camera, plus other "optional extras". What is really needed is a camera, sans camera case, plus a handy type gadget bag which will take spare lenses, exposure meter, films, cleaning items, etc. etc. There are several kinds on the market, from the very simple "sling" type soft leather or plastic to the very sophisticated aluminium "safari" case, which, incidentally, is normally waterproof, dustproof, heavy, and costs accordingly. But don't for goodness sake buy a gadget bag that will barely hold a camera and two rolls of film - you may as well buy a baggy sports coat. Second item on the agenda is a tripod, and here you once again have a choice. You may buy the ultra light thing that looks like very thin telescope and when you place your camera thereon you get the likeness to a full exhibition dahlia on a very thin stem and the similar "bend and wave in the breeze" effect - or you can go to other end of the scale and get a studio tripod which can weigh every bit of 50 kilo's. Personally, I'd say a tubular type tripod with a ball and socket head would be the best bet. Gitzo make a good one as do several other companies. But try and get a fairly stout job; when fully extended, with the centre post elevated to its' fullest extent, there should be no sway if you apply pressure to the head.

If a tripod is too cumbersome for your requirements, then try a monopod, which is better used with a pistol grip and

shoulder-stock attachment. A monopod is just a tubular piece of equipment consisting of tubes which telescope into on another when not in use, folding down to about 2'-6" (750mm) in length. When fully extended it's about 6' (1,800mm) long. This is very handy when on a field trip where a lot of carrying is involved.

So now you are weighted down with a gadget bag, a tripod, film, but no camera. Well, there are so many cameras on the market today I would hate to try and suggest that there is a "best" camera. I must assume that most people would settle for a 35mm through the lens type camera. (For colour slides, at least). For the purist a larger format, especially for colour negs. may be the choice. In the 35mm format there are Leica, Nikon, Mamiya, Canon, Pentax, Minolta, etc. etc. whilst the  $2\frac{1}{4}$ " square format has the Hasselblad and Bronica, with the so-called "perfect format" having the Pentax and Mamiya RB67 as representatives. (The RB part of it stands for revolving back, which gives one the advantage of turning the back from horizontal to vertical format whilst keeping the camera on the same plane). However, generally and rather rapidly, you should look for a 35mm that has interchangeable lenses, that caters for a solid range of accessories, that has a through the lens viewing system and metering system, and that has shutter speeds up to 1/1000sec. Some 35mm's now have the Copal type shutter which runs up and down instead of across the format, and this allows for flash sync. at 1/125 sec. instead of 1/60 or 1/80 sec. as is normal. Some cameras have the "stop down" method of metering as against others which have the "wide open" system. "Stop down" types are the one that have to close the aperture to that selected before a reading is given. (This can be annoying when shooting with telephoto lenses, especially those lenses with apertures of f8 and smaller). The "wide open" type give a reading with the lens aperture "wide open" and the aperture closes to the selected f stop when the shutter is released. Some cameras incorporate both systems as well as offering both "averaging" and "spot" metering.

The averaging meter gives you an average reading of the whole scene, the spot meter gives you a reading for a certain

"spot" or percentage of the scene. Both have advantages as well as disadvantages. You should have a good look at this area, but, if you are going to shoot nature mainly, then I would suggest the "wide open" type system with a plain ground glass screen.

Another choice, whilst talking of screens is the interchangeable screen system offered by several makes, and this can be useful at times. But I wouldn't put it in the "choice influencing" area.

There are other "extras" available, such as "automatic" attachments, viewfinders which just about scream at you when you are under or overexposing, others that lay down and die when there is not enough light for the film being used, etc. etc. If you really want to get confused, take three weeks leave and try the different photographic dealers in a few towns round and about. (You'll probably take up "Painting by Numbers").

The thing on the end of the camera is called a lens, and this is what will have the biggest affect on picture quality. A cheap and nasty lens will give you poor quality pictures, as a general rule. You may be lucky, and pick up a lens which has a smaller aperture than most, which will cut its' cost by quite a bit, but will still have quite good reproduction qualities. Always remember, those large hunks of glassware that have an aperture of f1.8 or larger (f0.8) cost a lot of loot. You may find that you'll very seldom use the lens wide open, as with todays film speeds, the light would have to be very bad indeed to shoot at  $\frac{1}{60}$  sec. at f1.8. (You could use a longer exposure at a smaller aperture anyway, and  $\frac{1}{60}$  sec. presupposes the use of a tripod so you haven't lost anything). A good thing to remember though, is that the so-called "standard" lens that they'll try and sell you with the camera isn't always the "ideal" lens. Usually it's a pricey bit of equipment, generally a 50mm or 55mm lens with an f stop of about 2.5, and it costs the earth. If you can, rather take a "macro" lens with an f stop of f4 (if necessary) and you'll probably save money and you'll now have a very versatile "standard" lens. The "macro" lens is a close-up lens, that is, it will focus down to 150mm or less, is really "correct-

ed" to way and back during production, in fact, it is generally "colour - corrected" to 3 colours and not the usual two. All in all, a worthwhile change. If the dealer wan't do the deal this, try the guy next door. I'ts your money.

Another useful item is an electronic flash - initially costly, but over the years it will work out cheaper than the flash bulb type of gun. The electronic  
K. Frankel APS (S.A.)

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by the flash from the unit on the camera. There is one model on the market at R7.50c and it works.

Another little item, or rather two items, which you can invest in cheaply are (a) lens hood and (b) eye cup. The lens hood will stop light getting into the lens when shooting into or near-into the sun, and will obviate lens flare. The eye cup will prevent light entering the viewfinder and effecting your meter reading and will also make it easier to use the viewfinder.

If you have more lolly lying around, or perhaps you have bad eyesight, then an attachment to the viewfinder can correct whatever shortfall you have in the eye. You can get these little correction lenses in + or - type diopters. You'll need to get the optician to tell you what you need. Although some camera have this sort of thing attached, much in the manner of a set of binoculars have this item attached, to one eyepiece.

Obviously we now talk about lenses required. These will round out your kit, and make life a little easier all round. A middle range zoom is a very useful item, say an 80 - 230mm or a similar range. The bigger zooms cost more and weigh more, but today the reproduction gained with a zoom is very good. Zooms have the advantage of making composition much easier, you can get a picture you may miss when changing lenses, they make the gadget bag that much easier to carry, as instead of 4 or 5 lenses, the two zooms can cover that whole range and more, and they also allow for some kinky shots which are impossible with standard focal lengths. However, they cost a lot more and are heavier. And a cheap zoom is usually not worth carrying home, let alone using.

If you aren't a zoom fan, then you'd need a 50mm standard (a macro hey) and a 120mm for portraiture and landscapes, perhaps a 250mm for far shots and animals, a 400mm for smaller animals, and anything from a 500mm to a 1000mm if you are going to be a "birdman".

Then you can go for a wide-angle if you want to go in for interior stuff, or get a "fisheye" if you fancy distorted pictures. (I mean deliberately distorted,

not accidentally distorted). However, I doubt that you'll need all those lenses in the first two weeks, so you can wait for a month before buying the second lens. (I'll bet you buy something in the 200mm to 400mm range).

If you really want to go dilly, you can get yourself a set of extension tubes, which will allow you to focus down to very little and this will give enlargements of up to X5 with the use of three rings. Remember though, the rings (or tubes) absolutely "kill" your depth of field and also slow down the speed owing to the amount of light lost. You can get a little more sophisticated and buy a set of bellows which will allow more enlargement of the subject, give less depth of field and slow things down a lot more. But I'll tell you now, this type of photography is probably the most interesting there is, and some fantastic results are obtained with close-up attachments and gadgets. More of this much later.

Filters come next and this in itself could fill a book. In fact, several books have been written on this subject. Filters come in all sorts of colours, red, yellow, blue, green and combinations of these. However, for colour work a polarising filter and a skylight filter will suffice. If using daylight type film under artificial light, then a blue conversion filter is required. You can also use artificial light film in daylight and get the correction filter for this also. Some people prefer it this way as the film speed with the filter is faster than daylight type with a blue filter. The red, yellow and green filters are for black and white work, although you can get some funny results shooting the sea or water with a long-exposure and changing the filters three times (That is one third of the exposure with a red filter, one third with a green and one third with a yellow - using colour film of course).

The miscellaneous items, blower brush, lens tissues, lenscaps, notebooks, gummed tape, etc. will cost you very little.

And..... if you look around for bargains in second hand equipment, you can really get some very good stuff at a very low price. Especially if you look just af-

ter Father Christmas has been around, closely followed by the tax man. The snag here - you'll have no come-backs as a rule. However, there are genuine people around and you can get a very good outfit for well under R400.00. (Well, I told you in Part I that it was an expensive hobby, didn't I?) Forget about that Instamatic, you won't win any Salons with that stuff, unless you're an absolute wizard.

useful at times. But I wouldn't put it in the "choice influencing" area.

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